

Observations Calendar Workgroup Notes

Present: Wendy Miller, Bev Jenkins, Todd Redalen (DMCPs) Todd attended at Wendy's invitation since he is a contributor to the DMCPs Morale Committee. Mady was unavailable for the meeting due to project load.

Original Message from Secretary's office

The Secretary's Office is seeking assistance with prioritizing monthly, weekly and daily observations celebrated by the department. Traditionally, we have highlighted these observations via our social media channels; however, to build equity and inclusion within the department, it is important to educate staff on the history of ethnicities and the important role they play today.

These observations can be celebrated in multiple ways, such as social media engagement, learning events, emails from the secretary, etc. It is our hope that we can build a strong partnership and develop quality products that educate staff and encourage change.

Should there be an observation you feel should be on the list, please let us know.

Questions/Thoughts on Calendar

- The group wanted to know what criteria the secretary's office will use to pare down the list
- The original message highlighted ethnicities but the new list seems to be a bit of everything. There are cultural awareness and education themes such as "Black History", and "Asian Heritage Month" but also included are activities designed to promote awareness or acknowledge a group such as Veteran's day, Disabled American Day's National Fatherhood day (men) etc...
- The calendar functions as employee engagement and morale booster in addition to promoting cultural awareness
- Focused priority should be given to highlighting those activities which have a tie-in to our organizational mission and values e.g. foster care awareness, we could look to national observances
- Our group contacted the DCF Employee engagement committee chair and currently they don't have a calendar to share with us
- It was brought up that the larger DCF calendar may duplicate current observances at other organizational levels, but this does not preclude divisions from having their own observance which may not have been planned a year in advance
- There are some suggestions for observances for various cultures/ethnic groups but not for others e.g. Hmong but not Chinese. Is there a way of highlighting all of the various ethnicities without only mentioning those that currently have a nationally recognized day?

- An idea would be to add another column which mentions the program area tie in e.g. grandparent's day ties in with foster care and childcare. The tie in may not be automatically understood by some employees
- If we gauge the cultural makeup of DCF's staff it may give us more insight regarding how to acknowledge, educate and support our co-workers.
- Look at National observations which are related to our work
- It was suggested that perhaps every division have a calendar committee representative that maintains a calendar of events for the division and then these could be shared with the secretary's office.
- The group created a National Fatherhood Day to acknowledge men and the importance of fathers in their children's lives
- We might want to have service directed activity days that all employees can engage in to give back to the community like the "Toy drives" and "Sandwich making" days at DMCPs as an example